



Downtown



Louisville



Sign

Manual

Prepared by: the Department of Planning and Building Safety

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Ordinance #1580



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VISION AND PURPOSE

The vision statement for the Downtown Louisville Sign Manual is to:

Create a concise and flexible sign manual that promotes commerce, enables creativity, ensures visibility for all users, and requires compatibility with the historic architectural character and pedestrian scale of Downtown Louisville.

The purpose of this document is to illustrate the specific sign design guidelines for Downtown Louisville that accomplishes all of the following:

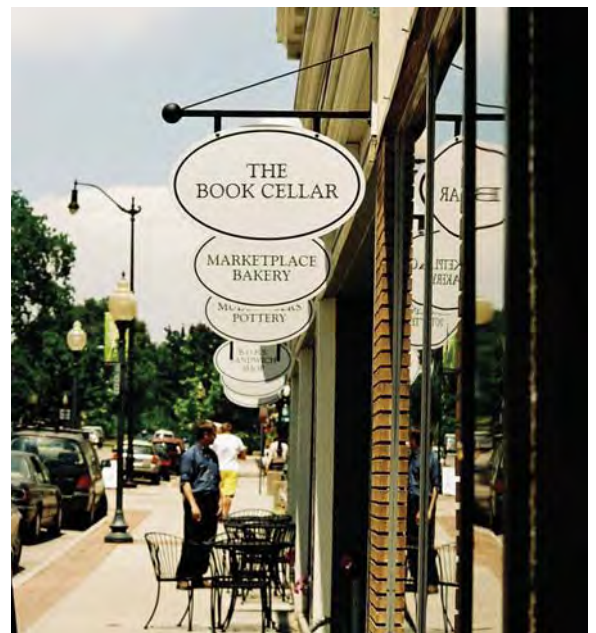
- Establish reasonable and improved standards for business identification;
- Encourage creative and innovative approaches to regulating signs consistent within the established principles of the Design Handbook for Downtown Louisville;
- Promote economic vitality in Downtown Louisville;
- Enhance overall visual environment in Downtown Louisville by discouraging signs which contribute to the visual clutter of the streetscape;
- Ensure commercial signs are designed for the purpose of identifying a business in an attractive and functional manner;
- Ensure signs on the façade of buildings reinforce the existing character and are complimentary to the architectural design of Downtown Louisville.



Downtown Louisville - Main Street



Downtown Louisville - Front Street



Downtown Louisville - Main Street





Downtown Louisville



Typeface and artwork for a unifying sign program should be consistent in color, material, style and overall aesthetic from sign to sign. This creates a recognizable consistency and unified appearance.

The requirements, standards, and guidelines set forth in this manual apply to all properties within Downtown Louisville as highlighted on the map and defined in Section 17.08.113 of the Louisville Municipal Code. Design guidelines identified within this manual replace the Design Standards for Signs contained in the Design Handbook for Downtown Louisville and Chapter 17.24 of the Louisville Municipal Code (LMC).

The Downtown Louisville Sign Manual includes typical illustrations and photographs intended to provide examples of preferred sign types within Downtown Louisville. The intent is to provide each business the opportunity to utilize creative design while meeting the City of Louisville's Downtown sign requirements. Only the following sign types are allowed in Downtown Louisville:

Building Sign Types:

- Wall Signs
- Marquee
- Awning Signs
- Canopy Signs
- Window Signs
- Projecting Signs

Other Types:

- Free Standing
- Sandwich Boards
- Restaurant Menu Boxes
- Kiosks
- Murals
- Temporary Signs

SIGN OVERVIEW

- All signs shall be architecturally integrated with their surroundings in terms of size, shape, color, texture, and lighting so they are complementary to the overall design of the buildings.
- Signs should reflect the character of the building and its use.
- Signs shall respect the immediate context of the building's location and the overall character of Downtown Louisville.
- Signs shall enhance the primary design elements or unique architectural features of buildings.
- Signs should be designed with the purpose of promoting retail, visibility, and street activity while enhancing the pedestrian experience.
- Signs shall not cover or obscure unique architectural features that contribute to the character of the building.
- Consideration of the layout and shape of architectural features of the building is necessary when determining the size and location of a sign.

SIGN PROGRAM AND MULTIPLE SIGNS

Each business which displays more than one exterior sign shall implement an exterior sign program. Sign programs serve to create a coordinated project theme of uniform design elements including: color, lettering style, material, and placement. Each business should have a consistent palette of signs designed in a similar character and style.

APPLICABILITY

GENERAL STANDARDS

- All signs in Downtown Louisville, except sandwich board signs, shall be located and maintained on the same lot as the permitted uses; and shall be clearly incidental, customary and commonly associated with the operation of the permitted use.
- No sign in Downtown Louisville shall be allowed to be erected, installed, placed or maintained in or on any public property, including sidewalks and parkways, except for sandwich board signs which comply with the requirements of this document; signs with a license agreement; or signs installed by a public agency.
- No sign shall be attached to a tree or utility pole whether on public or private property.
- No sign shall be placed or maintained at any location where its position, size, shape or color will obstruct, impair, obscure, interfere with the view of, or be confused with, any traffic control sign, signal or device, or interfere with, mislead or confuse traffic.
- No sign shall be located in any vision clearance area.
- Signs shall not flash, blink or fluctuate.
- Any request for an increase in the maximum allowable height, area, or number of signs permitted by this document must follow the procedures set forth in the Louisville Municipal Code for approval of a Final Planned Unit Development (PUD), where the applicant seeks approval from the Planning Commission and City Council. This process will be expedited by the Department of Planning and Building Safety. The review criteria on page 27 of this manual will be used as the basis of the evaluation. For iconic signs, such request may also be approved through the iconic sign designation process set forth in this document.

EXEMPTIONS

The following signs shall be exempt from the requirements of this document except for requirements relative to public safety:

- Flags or emblems of government, political, civic, philanthropic, educational or religious organization, displayed on private property, as long as such flag or emblem does not exceed 60 square feet;
- Signs of a duly constituted governmental body, including traffic or similar regulatory devices, legal notices, warnings at railroad crossings, and other instructional or regulatory signs having to do with health, hazard, parking, swimming, dumping, etc.;
- Address numerals and other signs required to be maintained by law or governmental order, rule or regulation; provided, the content and size of the sign do not exceed the requirements of such law, order, rule or regulation;
- Pennants, banners, posters, and sandwich board signs advertising a special civic event, provided such signs are erected no more than thirty (30) days prior to the event and are removed within two (2)



Street Faire Banner



Street Faire



Winter Skate Banner



Taste of Louisville

days after the termination of the event;

- Small signs, not exceeding five square feet in area, displayed on private property for the convenience of the public, including signs to identify entrance and exit drives, parking areas, one-way drives, restrooms, freight entrances and the like;
- Holiday decorations, clearly incidental and customary and commonly associated with any national, local or religious holiday; provided such signs shall be displayed for a period of not more than 45 consecutive days nor more than 60 days in any one year; and may be of any type, number, area, height, location, illumination or animation.

The following signs are exempt from the requirements of obtaining a sign permit but shall comply with all other regulations imposed in this document:

- Memorial signs and tablets displayed on private property;
- Identification signs not exceeding 15 square feet in gross surface area accessory to a church, school or public or nonprofit institution;
- Bulletin board signs not exceeding 15 square feet in gross surface area accessory to a church, school or public or nonprofit institution;
- Political signs;
- Real Estate Signs;
- Yard or garage sale signs directing the public to a yard or garage sale shall be allowed in any zone district and need not be located on the same lot as the permitted use, subject to the following specific additional requirements:
 - o Shall be posted only on the day of the sale as identified on the sign;
 - o Shall not exceed four feet in height and six square feet in area;
 - o Shall bear the name and address of the person holding the yard or garage sale and the location and date of the sale;
 - o Shall not be attached to any public sign pole nor placed in or on any street, sidewalk or other public right-of-way, or on any city property, or impede motor vehicle or pedestrian traffic;
 - o Shall not be placed on private property without the permission of the owner;
 - o Shall not be placed on residential property without the permission of the resident.

DEFINITIONS

Words, terms and phrases used in this design manual, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Animated sign: any sign flashing or simulating motion with an electronic or manufactured source of supply or contains wind-actuated motion.

Architectural Features: finished elements of a building that define a structure's architectural style and physical uniqueness, including, but not limited by windows, doors, trim, and ornamental features.

Architectural projection: any projection which is not intended for occupancy and extends beyond the face of an exterior wall of a building, including arcades, roof overhangs, mansards, unenclosed exterior balconies, marquees, canopies, fascias and the like, but not including signs.

Awning: a movable shelter supported entirely from the exterior wall of a building and of a type which can be retracted, folded or collapsed against the face of the supporting building.

Back-lit letter: an illuminated reverse channel letter (open or translucent back) so light from the letter is directed against the surface behind the letter producing a halo lighting effect around the letter. Also referred to as silhouette lit or halo lit.

Banner: any sign of lightweight fabric or similar material permanently mounted to a pole or a building by a frame at one or more edges. National flags, state or municipal flags, or the official flag of any institution or business shall not be considered banners.

Billboard: a sign identifying or communicating a commercial or noncommercial message related to an activity conducted, a service rendered, or a commodity sold at a location other than where the sign is located.

Cabinet sign: a sign structure consisting of the frame and face(s), not including the internal components, embellishments or support structure.

Canopy: any open, permanent roof-like accessory structure which is supported by the principal building.

Copy: the words, message, or logo displayed on a sign.

Copy area: the area that encloses the words, message, or logo on a sign.

Channel letter: a dimensional letter with no face and, if illuminated the light source is visible. A clear, or translucent face for physical protection of internal components may be used.

Civic event: any transient amusement enterprise held on property or right-of-way owned, or controlled by the City of Louisville with a license agreement and sponsored by the City.



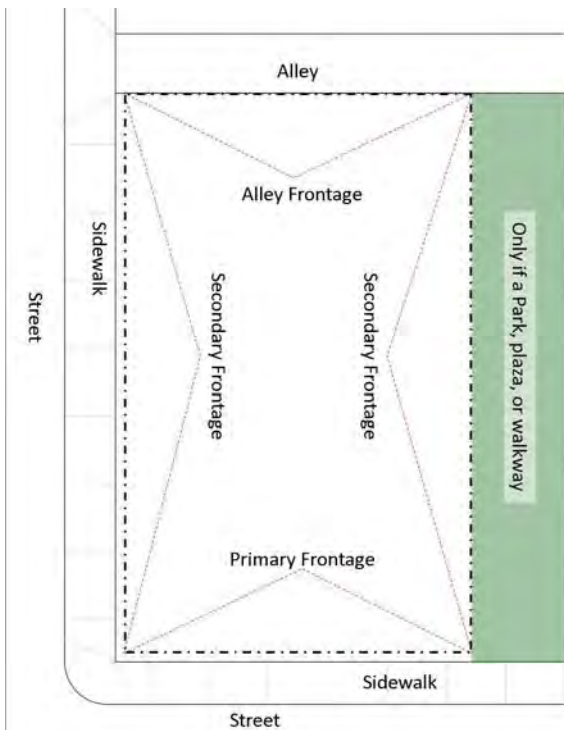
Neon lighting around the leaves. Back-lit, or Halo lighting for the tree and the word "grow". Channel lettering (not allowed) for the word "marketing".



Channel lettering - Not Allowed



Direct (internal) Illumination - Not Allowed



Frontages

Direct illumination: lighting by means of an unshielded light source (including neon tubing) which is effectively visible as a part of the sign, where light travels directly from the source to the viewer's eye.

Electric sign: any sign containing electrical wiring, but not including signs illuminated by exterior light sources, such as floodlights.

Fabric sign: any sign, banner, pennant, valance or advertising display constructed of cloth, canvas, fabric or other lightweight material, with or without frames, and is not permanently fixed to a supporting structure.

Freestanding sign: a sign which is supported by one or more exposed columns, uprights or braces in or upon the ground.

Frontage: the linear frontage - *Primary, Secondary, and Alley* - of a lot or parcel abutting on a public street, park, plaza, designated walkway, and alley. For a corner lot, the longest street right-of-way line shall be considered as the secondary frontage.

Iconic sign: an existing non-conforming sign with a distinctive architectural style and specifically designated as an Iconic Sign.

Indirect illumination: lighting by means of a light source which is directed at a reflecting surface in such a way as to illuminate the sign from the front, or a light source which is primarily designed to illuminate the entire building facade upon which a sign is displayed. Indirect illumination does not include lighting which is primarily used for purposes other than sign illumination; e.g., parking lot lights, or lights inside a building which may silhouette a window sign but which is primarily installed to serve as inside illumination.

Internal illumination: lighting by means of a light source which is within a sign having a translucent background, silhouetting opaque letters or designs, or which is within letters or designs which are themselves made of a translucent material.

Kiosk: a small structure, typically located within a pedestrian walkway or similar circulation area, and intended for use as a key, magazine or similar type of small shop, or for use as display space for posters, notices, exhibits, etc.

Landmark Sign: an existing sign with a distinctive architectural style and historic significance which has been officially designated as an Landmark Sign with the owner's consent by the Historic Preservation Commission and City Council consistent with the requirements of section 15.36.050 of the Louisville Municipal Code.

Light source: neon, fluorescent or similar tube lighting, incandescent bulb (including the light-producing elements therein), light-emitting diode (LED) and any reflecting surface which, by reason of its construction and/or placement, becomes in effect the light source.

DEFINITIONS

Lot: a portion or parcel of land, whether part of a platted subdivision or otherwise, occupied or intended to be occupied by a building or use and its accessories, together with such yards as are required under the provisions of the zoning ordinance. A lot must be an integral unit of land held under unified ownership in fee or in cotenancy, or under legal control tantamount to such ownership.

Maintenance: the replacing, repairing or repainting of a portion of a sign structure; periodic changing of bulletin board panels; or renewing of copy which has been made unusable by ordinary wear and tear, weather or accident. The replacing or repairing of a sign or sign structure which has been damaged to an extent exceeding 50 percent of the appraised replacement cost (as determined by the building official) shall be considered as maintenance only when such sign conforms to all of the applicable provisions of this Code and when the damage has been caused by an act of God or violent accident.

Marquee: a permanently-roofed structure with changeable messages attached to and supported by a building above an entrance, and projecting from the building no more than four (4) feet.

Monument sign: any sign which is anchored to the ground with a monolithic base and is independent of any other structure.

Multi-tenant building: a structure housing more than one retail business, office or commercial venture but not including residential apartment buildings, which share the same lot, access and/or parking facilities.

Nonconforming: a sign that does not conform to the provisions of this manual.

Off-premise: a sign which advertises or directs attention to products or activities not provided on the parcel upon which the sign is located.

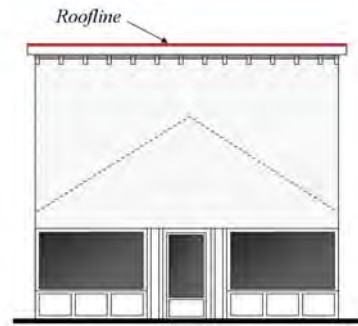
Pole-mounted: a sign supported by one or more poles and used for traffic regulation or to provide appropriate directions to loading and receiving areas, visitor parking, and other areas within each development site.

Projecting sign: a double-faced sign which projects more than 12 inches over private or public property, or hanging sign perpendicular to the street, and uses a building wall or canopy as its main source of support.

Roof line: the highest point on any building where an exterior wall encloses usable floor space, including floor area for housing mechanical equipment. The term "roof line" also includes the highest point on any parapet wall, providing such parapet wall extends around the entire perimeter of the building.

Roof sign: a sign erected upon or above a roof or parapet wall of a building and which is wholly or partially supported by such building.

Setback: the distance from the property line to the nearest part of the



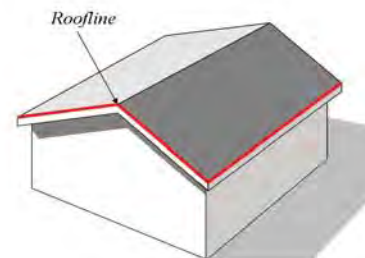
False Front - Roof Line



Mansard Roof - Roof Line

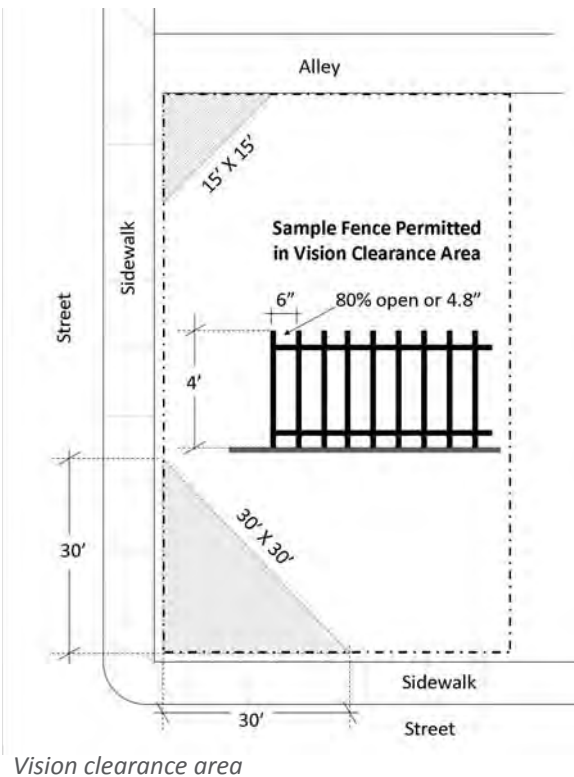


Parapet - Roof Line



Gable - Roof Line





applicable building, structure, or sign, measured perpendicularly to the property line.

Sign: any writing, pictorial representation, decoration (including any material used to differentiate sign copy from its background), form, emblem, or trademark, flag or banner, or any other figure of similar character which:

- A. Is a structure or any part thereof (including the roof or wall of a building); or
- B. Is written, printed, projected, painted, constructed or otherwise placed or displayed upon or designed into a building, board, plate, canopy, awning, vehicle, or upon any material object or device whatsoever; and
- C. Which by reason of its form, color, wording, symbol, design, illumination, motion, or otherwise, attracts or is designed to attract attention to the subject thereof or is used as a means of identification, advertisement or announcement.

Sign face: the surface of a sign upon, against, or through which the message is displayed or illustrated.

Sign height: the vertical distance from the established grade at the base of the sign to the highest element or the uppermost point on the sign or sign structure.

Sign program: a design package that identifies a coordinated project theme of uniform design elements for all sign associated with a building, including color, lettering style, material, and placement.

Temporary sign: a sign which is intended to advertise community or civic projects, construction projects, real estate for sale or lease, or other special events on a temporary basis.

Vision clearance area: a triangular area on a lot at the intersection of two streets or a street and a railroad, two sides of which are lot lines measured from the corner intersection of the lot lines to a distance specified in the Louisville Municipal Code. The third side of the triangle is a line across the corner of the lot joining the ends of the other two sides. Where the lot lines and intersections have rounded corners, the lot lines will be extended in a straight line to a point of intersection. The vision clearance area contains no plantings, walls, structures, or temporary or permanent obstructions exceeding 30 inches in height measured from the top of the curb or existing grade unless such structures or obstructions are more than 80 percent open.

Wall sign: a sign which is affixed to any exterior wall of a building or structure, including hanging signs parallel to the street and which projects not more than twelve (12) inches.

Window sign: any interior sign within six (6) feet of a window, or painted, attached, glued, or otherwise affixed to a window for the purpose of being visible from the exterior of the building.

ALLOWED COPY AREA

In Downtown Louisville, each building's sign program will have a maximum allowed copy area. Each building will be allowed copy area for:

- A combination of wall, marquee, awning/canopy, and free standing signs for primary and secondary frontages for corner lots, or parcels adjoining a park space, civic plaza, or designated walkway;
- Wall signs for alley frontages with an entrance, or an access point to a designated walkway;
- Projecting signs for primary and secondary frontages;
- Projecting signs for alley frontages with an entrance, or an access point to a designated walkway;
- Window signs;
- A sandwich board sign; and
- A restaurant menu box.

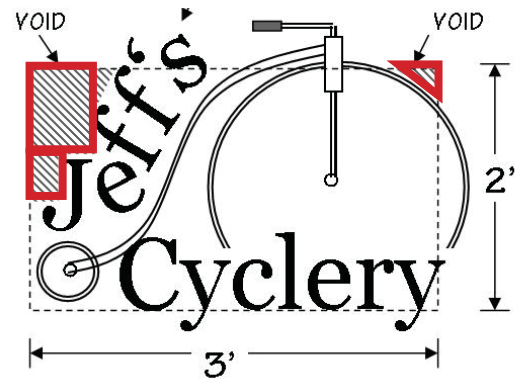
MEASUREMENT

A sign's copy area shall be measured by including within a single continuous rectilinear perimeter of not more than eight straight lines which enclose the extreme limits of writing, representation, lines, emblems, or figures contained within all modules together with any air space, materials or colors forming an integral part or background of the display or materials used to differentiate such sign from the structure against which the sign is placed. The building's architectural features, structural supports and landscape elements shall not be included within the sign area.

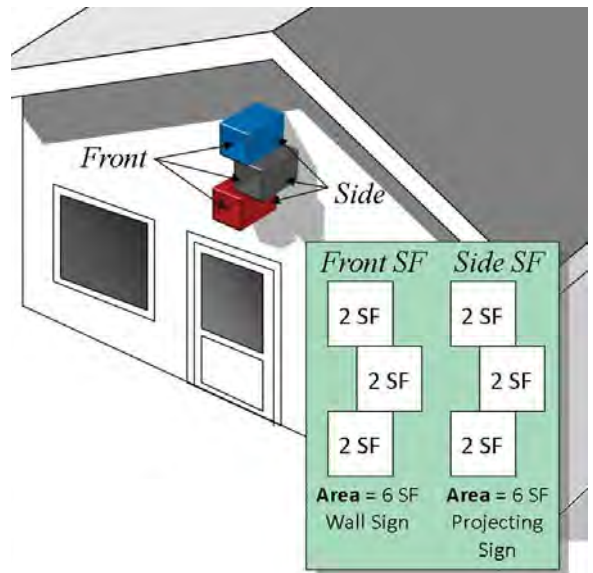
- Areas of airspaces, or voids, on any sign will be subtracted from the sign's total copy area. These voids will be measured using the closest rectilinear shape.
- For all two-faced freestanding or projecting signs, the area measurement shall be determined by the measurement of one face of the sign only.
- Where three-dimensional figures are used as signs, the area shall be the total area of its silhouette as projected on a vertical plane.
- On corner and double-frontage lots, each building frontage abutting a street, public park, plaza, or designated walkway shall be considered to have both a primary and secondary frontage. The Planning and Building Safety Department shall make determinations of which frontage will be considered primary and secondary based upon consideration of line of sight requirements, driveway locations, pedestrian entrance, building height, safety, and character and compatibility with Downtown Louisville.



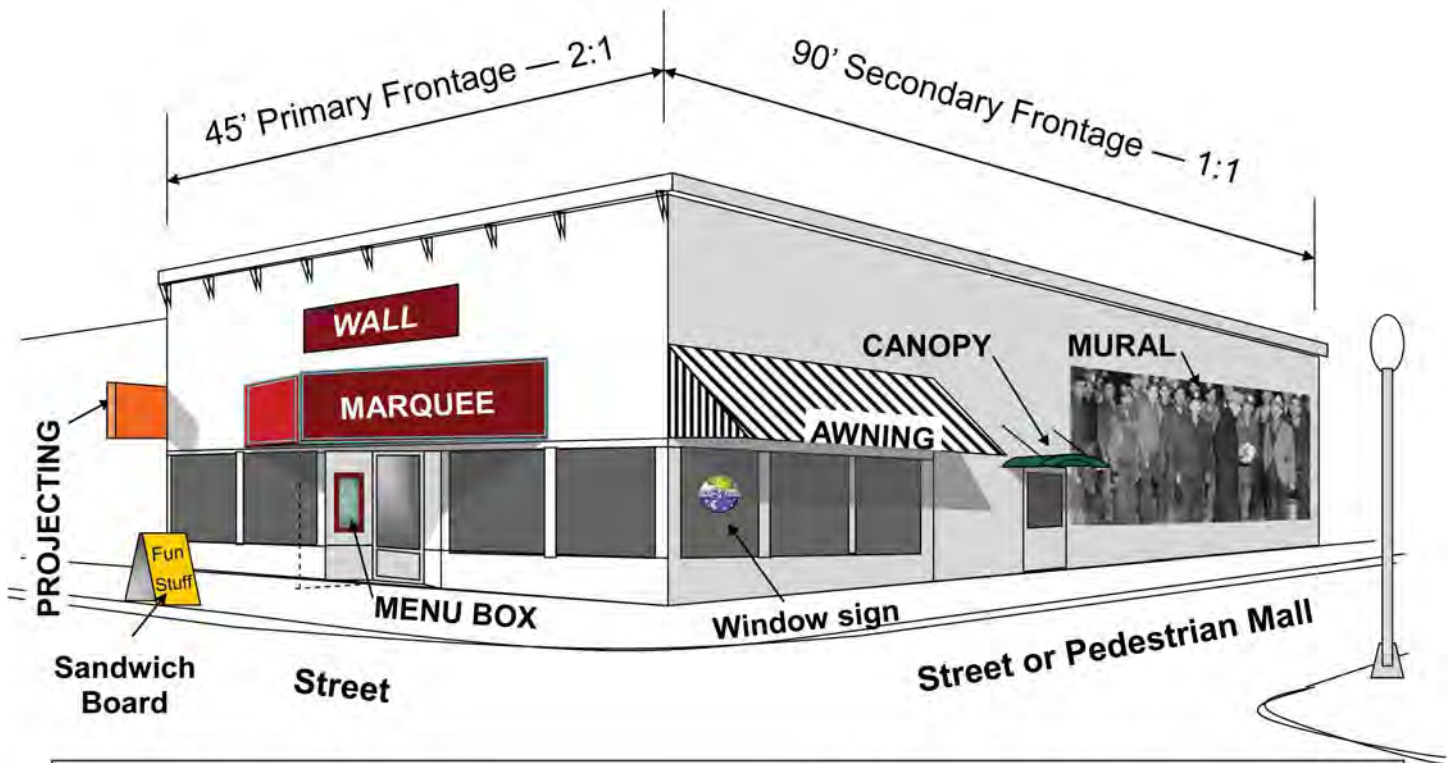
8-Line Measurement



Voids will be discounted by the closest rectilinear shape



A 3D sign will be measured area by its silhouette's projection on a vertical plane



Building Measurement:

45' (primary frontage)
90' (secondary frontage)

Sign Area:

*Primary—45' (2:1)= 90 SF
*Secondary—90' (1:1)=90 SF

*= May not cumulate the sign area

Wall sign area—36 SF

Marquee sign area—27 SF each side

Total sign area— 90 SF

Note:

In this example, the wall sign and marquee sign would need to share the area for the primary frontage.

REGULATIONS BY SIGN TYPE

WALL SIGNS

Wall signs are signs painted on, or mounted flush and fixed securely to a building wall, including hanging wall signs parallel to the street and projecting no more than twelve (12) inches from the face of a building.

Primary and Secondary Frontage – Size

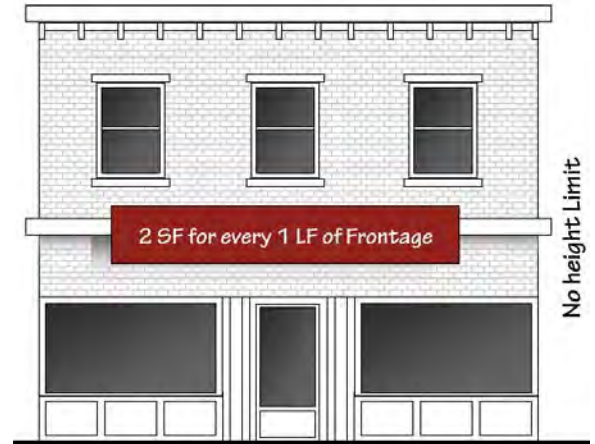
- The maximum copy area for the combination of any wall, marquee, awning/canopy, and free standing signs is two (2) square feet (SF) of sign area for every one (1) linear foot of primary frontage plus one (1) SF of sign area for every one (1) linear foot of secondary frontage for corner lots, or parcels adjoining a park space, civic plaza, or designated walkway. The maximum allowed copy area may be utilized with any combination wall, marquee, awning/canopy, and free standing signs.
- The total copy area of wall signs is two (2) SF of sign area for every one (1) linear foot of primary frontage plus one (1) SF of sign area for every one (1) linear foot of secondary frontage for corner lots, or parcels adjoining a park space, civic plaza, or designated walkway.

Alley Frontage - Size

- Wall signs are only allowed on a building's alley frontage if there is an operable entrance to the building, or access to a designated walkway.
- The maximum copy area for the combination of any wall and awning/canopy sign along an alley is one (1) SF of sign area for every one (1) linear foot of alley frontage.

Placement

- Wall signs should be located on the upper portion of the storefront, within or just above the framed opening.
- Hanging sign (parallel to the street) shall be located on the front eave of the building's roof line.
- Wall signs can extend up to the roof line, no more than twenty (20) feet from existing grade, and cannot extend above the 2nd story window sill of the building to which it is attached.
- The length of the wall sign shall not exceed the width of the framed storefront.
- Signs shall not obscure the building's windows, doors, or ornamental features.
- Wall signs shall be designed to be compatible with the storefront in scale, proportions, and color.



Wall sign placement compliments the building architecture



Wall Sign Diagram



Wall Sign Diagram

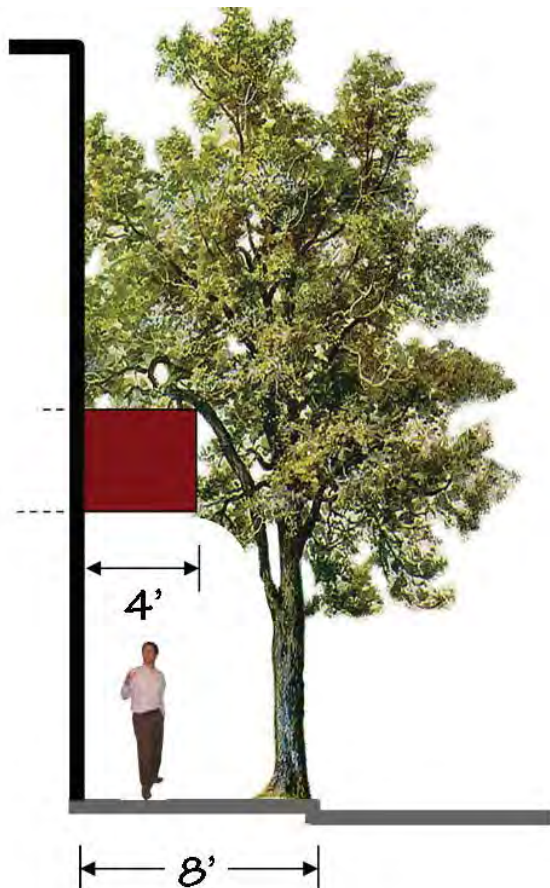
REGULATIONS BY SIGN TYPE



Code - Total allowable marquee sign area is 2 SF for every linear foot of the building (same as wall area).

25' (bldg. width) X 2' = 50 SF total allowable sign area

- Marquee sign area will count towards allowable wall sign area.
- Maximum width of marquee structure — building edge to building edge
- Maximum Height of marquee structure — 4'
- Maximum projection from building — 8'
- Minimum clearance from grade — 8'
- Maximum Height on building (from grade) — roofline or 20'



SIDEWALK

MARQUEE

A marquee is a permanently-roofed structure with changeable messages attached to and supported by a building above an entrance, and projecting from the building no more than four (4) feet. Marquees are allowed to have non-electric changeable letters and messages to advertise live entertainment events, or performances on premise.

Primary and Secondary Frontage - Size

- The maximum copy area for the combination of any wall, marquee, awning/canopy, and free standing signs is two (2) square feet (SF) of sign area for every one (1) linear foot of primary frontage plus one (1) SF of sign area for every one (1) linear foot of secondary frontage for corner lots, or parcels adjoining a park space, civic plaza, or designated walkway. The maximum allowed copy area may be utilized with any combination wall, marquee, awning/canopy, and free standing signs.
- The total copy area of a marquee sign is two (2) SF of sign area for every one (1) linear foot of primary frontage plus one (1) SF of sign area for every one (1) linear foot of secondary frontage for corner lots, or parcels adjoining a park space, civic plaza, or designated walkway.
- The sign on the marquee shall not be taller than four (4) feet.

Alley Frontage - Size

- Marquees are not allowed along an alley frontage.

Placement

- A marquee shall be located on the upper portion of the storefront, within or just above a framed storefront opening, no less than eight (8) feet above the ground.
- A marquee shall not extend above the roof line, or the 2nd story window sill of the building to which it is attached.
- The length of the marquee shall not exceed the width of the framed storefront.
- A marquee shall not obscure the building's windows, doors, or ornamental features.
- A marquee shall be designed to be compatible with the storefront in scale, proportions, and color.

REGULATIONS BY SIGN TYPE

AWNING AND CANOPY SIGNS

Awning and canopy signs are signs printed on, painted on, or attached to an awning or canopy above a business door, or window. They generally serve to bring color to the shopping environment and are oriented toward either pedestrians from the opposite side of the street, or walking along an adjacent sidewalk. Awning and canopy signs are regulated by the amount of primary and secondary frontages of the building and the length of the awning or canopy.

Primary and Secondary Frontage - Size

- The maximum copy area for the combination of any wall, marquee, awning/canopy, and free standing signs is two (2) square feet (SF) of sign area for every one (1) linear foot of primary frontage plus one (1) SF of sign area for every one (1) linear foot of secondary frontage for corner lots, or parcels adjoining a park space, civic plaza, or designated walkway. The maximum allowed copy area may be utilized with any combination wall, marquee, awning/canopy, and free standing signs.
- The copy area of the awning and canopy sign along a primary frontage and secondary frontage is one (1) SF of canopy sign area for every one (1) linear foot of awning, or canopy.

Alley Frontage - Size

- The maximum copy area for the combination of any wall and awning/canopy sign along an alley is one (1) SF of sign area for every one (1) linear foot of alley frontage.
- The maximum copy area of any awning/canopy sign along an alley is one (1) SF of canopy sign area for every one (1) linear foot of awning, or canopy.

Placement

- The minimum height of awnings shall be eight (8) feet from the lowest point of the awning to the sidewalk.
- The minimum height of canopies shall be twelve (12) feet from the lowest point to the sidewalk.
- Awnings and canopies shall be mounted on the horizontal framing element separating the storefront window from the transom (a crosspiece separating a doorway from a window).
- Awnings and canopies shall be designed to be compatible with the storefront in scale, proportions, and color.
- Awnings and canopies with backlit graphics or other kinds of interior illumination are not permitted.
- Matte finish canvas, glass, or metal are appropriate materials for awnings or canopies.



Awning Sign



Awning Sign

REGULATIONS BY SIGN TYPE



Freestanding Sign



Freestanding Sign

FREE STANDING SIGNS

A freestanding sign is a sign supported by one or more exposed columns, uprights or braces in, or upon the ground. Free standing signs are typically used for buildings separated from adjacent streets by substantial setbacks. A monument sign is a sign which is anchored to the ground with a monolithic base and are not allowed within Downtown Louisville.

Size

- The maximum copy area for the combination of any wall, marquee, awning/canopy, and free standing signs is two (2) square feet (SF) of sign area for every one (1) linear foot of primary frontage plus one (1) SF of sign area for every one (1) linear foot of secondary frontage for corner lots, or parcels adjoining a park space, civic plaza, or designated walkway. The maximum allowed copy area may be utilized with any combination wall, marquee, awning/canopy, and free standing signs.
- The copy area of a freestanding sign is nine (9) SF per side.
- The maximum height of a freestanding sign, including the sign base, is six (6) feet.

Placement

- Each building is allowed one free standing sign.
- The free standing sign shall not be placed on public right-of-way.
- Free standing signs shall be designed to be compatible with the storefront in material, scale, proportions, and color.
- Opaque backgrounds are required and shall be a non-reflective material.
- Free standing signs shall only be used when other alternative types of signage cannot provide adequate identification.

REGULATIONS BY SIGN TYPE

PROJECTING SIGNS

Projecting signs mean a double-faced sign which projects more than 12 inches over private or public property, or a hanging sign perpendicular to the street, and which uses a building wall or canopy as its main source of support.

Size

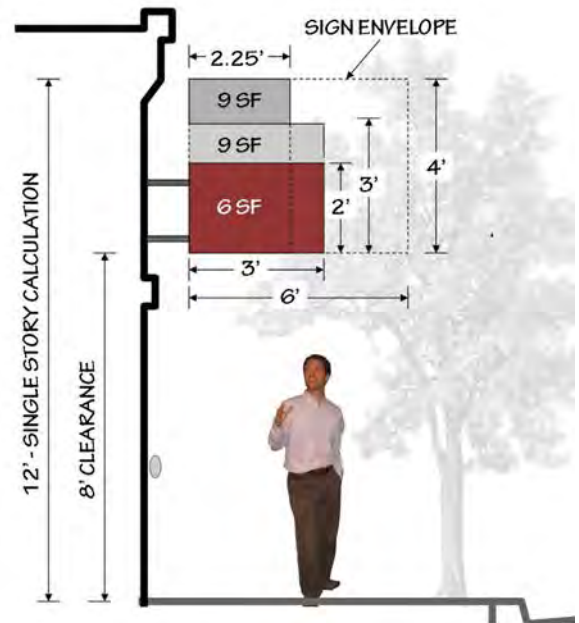
- The maximum copy area of each projecting sign along all building frontages is nine (9) square feet (SF) per side.
- Any end panel on a projecting sign is considered a face of the sign and is included in the measurement of the copy area for a wall sign if the end panel is twelve (12) inches, or more in width.

Primary and Secondary Frontage - Placement

- Single tenant buildings must place the projecting signs near a building entrance.
- Multi-tenant buildings may utilize one projecting sign per tenant.
- The minimum clearance of a projecting sign located over public property is eight (8) feet from the ground. There is no minimum clearance requirement for a projecting sign over private property.
- The maximum height of a projecting sign is twelve (12) feet above the sidewalk.
- Projecting signs shall not extend from the building façade for a greater distance than six (6) feet, or two-thirds the width of the adjacent sidewalk, whichever is less.
- For single tenant buildings with primary and secondary frontage longer than 25-feet, projecting signs shall be spaced a minimum of one every twenty-five (25) feet.
- Multi-tenant buildings can space projecting signs a minimum of one every ten (10) feet of linear primary and secondary frontage.

Alley Frontage - Placement

- The copy area of each projecting sign along any alley is nine (9) SF per side.
- A projecting sign can only be placed at a business entrance on the alley, or an access point to a pedestrian walkway from the alley.
- Projecting signs shall not extend from the building façade over the public right-of-way of the abutting alley frontage.
- Projecting signs shall not extend from the building façade for a greater distance than six (6) feet over private property along an alley.



Projecting Sign



Projecting Sign

REGULATIONS BY SIGN TYPE



Window Sign



Example: stylized gilding and typography



Any sign located on the interior within 6-feet of the window is considered a window sign

WINDOW SIGNS

Window signs are painted, posted, displayed, or etched on an interior translucent or transparent surface, including windows, or doors. This type of signage generally contains only text but in some circumstances can express a special business personality through graphic logos or images combined with color.

Any interior advertising display located within six (6) feet of a business window, or door is considered a window sign. Window signs should be created from high quality materials including paint, gold leaf, or vinyl. Recommended techniques for window signs include sandblasting, gilded or etched glass. Temporary posters announcing or advertising events sponsored by noncommercial organizations shall be exempt from the limitations for window signs.

Size

- The maximum copy area of a window sign is twenty (20) percent of the window, or eight (8) square feet, whichever is less.

REGULATIONS BY SIGN TYPE

SANDWICH BOARD SIGNS

A sandwich board sign is a moveable sign not secured or attached to the ground or surface upon which it is located, but supported by its own frame and most often forming the cross-sectional shape of an "A". Such signs are portable and are usually placed along public sidewalks to attract pedestrians into shopping areas.

Size

- A-frame, sandwich board signs are permitted in Downtown Louisville.
- The maximum copy area of a sandwich board sign is six (6) SF per side.
- Sandwich boards shall not exceed two (2) feet by three (3) feet and should not obstruct pedestrian traffic on sidewalks.

Placement

- Sandwich board signs may be placed in the public right-of-way on a sidewalk adjacent to a street and shall not obstruct vehicular, or bicycle traffic in the street, or obstruct pedestrian traffic on sidewalks.
- Each building tenant can have one sandwich board sign which must be located adjacent to the business that it advertises.
- Sandwich board signs shall be removed at the close of business each day for the business advertised.



Sandwich Board Sign

REGULATIONS BY SIGN TYPE



Menu Box Sign



Menu Box Sign

RESTAURANT MENU BOX SIGNS

Restaurant Menu Box Signs are signs incorporating a menu containing a listing of products and prices offered by the business. Such signs facilitate the customer in locating a restaurant in which to patronize. Therefore, prominently displayed menus with prices and other important information can help the customer in making this decision.

Size

- The allowable sign area for restaurant menu box signs shall be a maximum of eight (8) square feet.

Placement

- Restaurant menu box signs shall be located in a permanently mounted display box on the surface of the building within eight (8) feet of the entry. Taping a menu to a box is not an appropriate menu sign.
- High quality materials and artistic designs shall be used in the construction of menu box signs.
- Restaurant menu box signs are not included in the calculation of maximum sign area.
- Restaurant menu box signs shall be appropriate in material, size, location, and design to the character and architectural detail of the building as well as to the character of the restaurant.

REGULATIONS BY SIGN TYPE

MURALS

A mural is a large picture painted directly on a wall. Murals are valuable additions to Louisville in that they improve architecturally stark building facades and improve the visual interest of Downtown Louisville.

A mural cannot contain images, pictures, words or depictions that are obscene.

Murals using advertising content are regulated as a wall sign and are subject to the standards herein governing wall signs.

Murals using no advertising content are subject to the size requirement below.

Size

- Murals using advertising content are subject to the size requirements for wall signs.
- Other murals shall not exceed fifty (50) percent of a building facade.

Placement

- Murals are permitted only on walls with a minimum of five hundred (500) SF of uninterrupted space (no windows, architectural features, openings).



Mural



Mural

REGULATIONS BY SIGN TYPE



Kiosk



Kiosk

KIOSK

A kiosk is a small structure, typically located within a pedestrian walkway or similar circulation area (on either public or private property) and is intended for use as a key, magazine or similar type of small shop, or for use as display space for posters, notices, exhibits, etc. Kiosks may be permitted only if expressly authorized in an approved Final Planned Unit Development (PUD) development plan, or as a Special Review Use (SRU), which may contain additional standards and requirements concerning the design, construction, maintenance and operation of any kiosk.

Size

- The size of the kiosk is dependent on the proposed activity. Specific design considerations will be presented and discussed between the applicant and staff on an individual basis through the Final Planned Unit Development (PUD), or Special Review Use (SRU) process.

Placement

- The placement of the kiosk is dependent on the proposed activity. Specific design considerations will be presented and discussed between the applicant and staff on an individual basis through the Final Planned Unit Development (PUD), or Special Review Use (SRU) process.

REGULATIONS BY SIGN TYPE

TEMPORARY SIGNS

Temporary signs in Downtown Louisville shall be subject to the following specific requirements:

Construction Signs

Signs advertising subdivision, development, construction or other improvement of a property shall be permitted in any zoning district, and shall comply with the following:

- Such signs shall be limited to freestanding, wall or window signs; shall not exceed thirty-two (32) SF per face, shall not exceed eight (8) feet in height, and shall not be placed higher than twenty (20') feet, and cannot extend above the 2nd story window sill of the building to which it is attached.
- No riders or attachments to such signs shall be permitted.
- Residential developments consisting of five dwelling units or less, the maximum area permitted shall be six (6) SF per face for each dwelling unit being constructed.
- Construction signs shall be displayed only on the property to which the sign pertains. One such sign shall be permitted per street frontage upon the property which either has frontage or an entrance from a major thoroughfare provided the minimum distance between signs on any single development shall be 1,000 feet.

Political Signs

- Signs concerning candidacy for public office or urging action on any ballot issue in a primary, general or special election shall be permitted in Downtown Louisville subject to the area and height restrictions set forth in this document.
- Signs in a Commercial zone (including Downtown Louisville) shall have a maximum height of eight (8) feet, an area of thirty two (32) square feet, and shall not be placed higher than twenty (20') feet, and cannot extend above the 2nd story window sill of the building to which it is attached.
- The person or organization responsible for the erection or distribution of any political signs, or the owner of the property upon which the signs are located, shall remove the signs within ten (10) days after the primary or special elections to which the signs pertain. If the signs continue to be pertinent to a general election to be held within ninety (90) days, then the signs shall be removed within ten days after the general election to which they pertain.
- Signs shall be erected and maintained only on private land;
- Signs shall not be posted more than ninety (90) days prior to the election to which the sign is related;
- Shall be limited to wall, window and ground signs;
- Shall be limited to two signs for each street which the lot abuts for



Temporary Sign - Civic Event



Temporary Real Estate Sign

REGULATIONS BY SIGN TYPE



Temporary Construction Sign



Temporary Political Sign

each permitted use;

- Shall not be animated; and,
- Shall not flash, blink or fluctuate; and may be illuminated only from a concealed light source.

Real Estate Signs

- Shall not be over four (4) feet in height or six (6) SF in area and shall not be placed higher than twenty (20') feet, and cannot extend above the 2nd story window sill of the building to which it is attached.

Civic Events

- Shall erected no more than thirty (30) days prior to the event and must be removed within two (2) days after the termination of the event;
- Pennants and banners may be located on street light poles within public right-of-way located where they do not create safety hazards and only with approval from the Department of Planning and Building Safety;
- May be located off premise with approval from the Department of Planning and Building Safety;
- Must be installed only by, or under the supervision, or with permission from the Department of Public Works.

Special Event

- Shall be erected on the day of the event and must be removed at the conclusion of the event;
- Pennants and banners may be located on street light poles within public right-of-way located where they do not create safety hazards and only with approval from the Department of Planning and Building Safety;
- Shall be not be located off premise.

Other Temporary Signs

Temporary signs not specifically regulated by the preceding subsections shall be displayed only in accordance with the following conditions:

- Shall be limited to freestanding, window or wall signs only; and cannot extend above the 2nd story window sill of the building to which it is attached.

shall not exceed forty (40) SF in total surface area per use; shall comply with the placement requirements for each sign type.

- Shall remain in place for no more than two (2), thirty (30) day periods in any one calendar year, except the Planning and Building Safety Department may, for good cause, extend the time period up to thirty (30) days upon application.

MATERIALS AND ILLUMINATION

MATERIALS

- Exterior materials, finishes, and colors shall complement those of the building or structures on site.
- Signs shall be professionally constructed using only high quality materials including: metal, stone, hard wood, brass-plated, and exposed neon.
- Internally lit plastic letters and plastic box signs are not allowed.
- The colors and lettering styles shall compliment the building façade and harmonize with neighboring businesses.
- Exposed neon tubing may be used in conjunction with other types of materials to artistically emphasize the business name and/or logo.
- Supporting members of a sign shall appear to be free of any extra bracing angle iron, guy wires, cables, etc.
- The supports shall appear to be an architectural and integral part of the building and/or sign.

ILLUMINATION

Illumination of signs shall be in accordance with the following requirements:

- The following light sources are allowed in Downtown Louisville:
 - Indirect External Illumination - External light sources shall be placed close to, and directed onto, the sign and shielded to minimize glare into the street or onto adjacent properties.
 - Back-lit, halo-lit illumination, or reverse channel letters with halo illumination.
 - Neon Lettering may be used as a primary, or accent to a business name, or logo on a sign.
- Projecting light fixtures used for externally illuminated signs shall be simple and unobtrusive in appearance. They should not obscure the graphics of the sign.
- White is the only light color permitted within Downtown Louisville for illuminating a sign, excluding neon.
- Only downward facing indirect external light is allowed along an alley frontage adjacent to residential land uses.
- The following light sources are prohibited in Downtown Louisville:
 - Internal Illumination - both internal cabinet signs and channel lettering.
 - Moving, blinking, or flashing signs.
 - Bare bulb illumination.
- Visible raceways and transformers shall be prohibited. Sign installation details should clearly indicate the location of the transformer and other mechanical equipment.



Neon Lighting - Allowed



Reverse Channel / Halo-Lit - Allowed



Indirect Lighting - Allowed

NONCONFORMING SIGNS



Back-Lit / Halo-Lit - Allowed



Internal-Lit - Not Allowed



Channel Lettering - Not Allowed

Whenever one of the following conditions occurs, a sign which is nonconforming to the regulations of this manual shall be brought into conformance, or shall terminate:

- When there is a change in the business or use to which the sign pertains;
- When there is a change in the copy on a sign, other than on reader panels;
- When there is a permit granted to change the sign;
- If any such sign or nonconforming portion thereof is destroyed by any means to an extent of more than 50 percent of its appraised value for tax purposes at the time of the destruction, it shall not be reconstructed except in conformity with the applicable provisions of this title;
- When the location of the sign is moved or altered.

Signs which have been officially designated as Iconic Signs, or Landmark Signs will not be required to comply with the requirements for non-conforming signs.

WAIVERS

Any request for an increase in the maximum allowable height, area, or number of signs permitted by this document must follow the procedures set forth in the Louisville Municipal Code for approval of a final Planned Unit Development (PUD), where the applicant seeks approval from the Planning Commission and City Council. This process will be expedited by the Department of Planning and building Safety. The review criteria on page 27 of this manual will be used as the basis of the evaluation.

ICONIC AND LANDMARK SIGN DESIGNATION

ICONIC SIGN

An Iconic Sign should evoke a sense of quality and unique visual appearances. It may, or may not, have historic significance. Signs which have been officially designated as an Iconic Sign by the Historic Preservation Commission and City Council and which retain those dimensional, locational, and lighting standards that the sign possessed when it received such a designation shall benefit from the following privileges:

- May remain on roofs, or exceed height limits found elsewhere in this design manual.
- May exceed dimensional limits found elsewhere in this design manual.
- May reference a product or business which is not related to the existing business on the property.
- May change the sign copy and logo while maintaining the architectural quality of the original sign.
- Shall not have the sign copy area deducted from the square footage of sign copy area granted by other standards in this design manual.
- May remain in a right-of-way unless it becomes a hazard.
- May retain its original lighting patterns and materials.
- May be removed by the owner if they so choose.

LANDMARK SIGN

A Landmark Sign shall meet the criteria established for a landmark structure as outline in section 15.36.050 of the Louisville Municipal Code. When a sign receives a landmark designation, it shall benefit from the following privileges:

- May be eligible for historic preservation funds for restoration, repair, or maintenance, with approval from the Historic Preservation Commission and City Council.
- May remain on roofs, or exceed height limits found elsewhere in this design manual.
- May exceed dimensional limits found elsewhere in this design manual.
- May reference a product or business which is not related to the existing business on the property.
- May change the sign copy only with an alteration certificate from the Historic Preservation Commission.
- Shall not have the sign copy area deducted from the square footage of sign copy area granted by other standards of this design manual.
- May remain in a right-of-way unless it becomes a hazard.



Blue Parrot



Old Louisville Inn



State Mercantile

ICONIC AND LANDMARK SIGN DESIGNATION



Empire Lounge



Casa Alegre

- May retain its original lighting patterns and materials.
- The granting of the Landmark Sign designation is based upon the criteria established in section 15.36.050 of the Louisville Municipal Code.

ICONIC SIGN REVIEW CRITERIA

The Department of Planning and Building Safety shall review all applications for the Iconic Sign designation for consistency with the review criteria and findings described below. The review shall include consideration of size, color, materials, illumination, location, as well as all other elements of creative sign design and construction. The application and staff report will then be forwarded to the Historic Preservation Commission for recommendation and City Council for official designation.

The granting of the Iconic Sign designation is based upon a sign's distinct qualities. The following criteria will be used to provide guidance during the Historic Preservation Commission and City Council's review. An Iconic Sign shall meet at least three (3) of the following four (4) criteria:

1. The sign, by its design, construction and location, will not have a substantial adverse effect on abutting property or the permitted use thereof, and will contribute to the City's unique character and quality of life.
2. The sign exhibits unique or rare characteristics that enhance the streetscape or identity of Downtown Louisville and it clearly provides a unique architectural style and appearance.
3. The sign contributes to the historical or cultural character of the streetscape or the community at large.
4. The sign and all parts, portions, and materials shall be maintained and kept in good repair. The display surface of all signs shall be kept clean, neatly painted, and free from rust and corrosion.

ICONIC SIGN DESIGNATION

The City of Louisville Historic Preservation Commission and City Council shall have the authority to approve or disapprove the designation of an Iconic Sign based upon the criteria stated above. At the time of submittal, the applicant must file all necessary information for the Department of Planning and Building Safety staff can determine if the sign meets the criteria. The Department of Planning and Building Safety has the authority to request additional information in order to form a recommendation to the Historic Preservation Commission and City Council. The burden of proof for meeting the criteria is upon the applicant. Once designated as an Iconic Sign, it shall be considered to be in compliance with this Downtown Louisville Sign Manual.

All signs painted, constructed, erected, remodeled, relocated, expanded or which have the copy of the sign changed or altered except those which are exempt, are required to obtain a permit from the City of Louisville Department Planning and Building Safety. No permit shall be issued unless there is full compliance with the provisions of this design manual and other applicable provisions of the Louisville Municipal Code.

APPROVAL PROCESS

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

All permanent signs, wall mounted, temporary, and sandwich board signs must submit a master sign program for review and approval by the Department of Planning and Building Safety. Each application submittal shall include the following:

- Proposed sign permit application (Four (4) sets).
- Full color 'to-scale' sketches of the proposed signs, displaying elevation and plan views, including materials, lighting, size, shape, design of all elements of the sign. (Four (4) sets).
- Illustrate the location of all signs in relation to the site plan, buildings, right-of-way, and property lines. (Show building and lot dimensions). A Final Planning Unit Development (PUD) site plan or an Improvement Location Certificate (ILC) can be used to complete this requirement.
- Additional submittal requirements may be requested at the discretion of the Department of Planning and Building Safety.

REVIEW CRITERIA

The purpose and intent of the review shall be to encourage uniform architectural standards and cohesive community development consistent with the purpose, intent and scope of this design manual. The Department of Planning and Building Safety may approve, approve with conditions, request modifications, or disapprove the issuance of a sign permit after consideration of the following criteria:

1. The proposed sign(s) shall be consistent and compatible with the color, materials, design of the on-site building(s).
2. The proposed signs(s) shall be scaled and located consistent with the scale of the lot and the massing of the building(s), with consideration of legibility of copy area.
3. The proposed sign(s) shall present a consistent and cohesive master design program, incorporating all site signage in similar color, materials, type-face, copy area, theme or design.
4. The proposed sign(s) are in conformity with the standards of this manual respecting the size, height, location, design and appearance of the sign(s) involved.
5. All existing and proposed signs must conform to the regulations and design standards of the building code of the city and all other applicable codes. Wiring of all electrical signs must conform to the electrical code of the city.

SUBMITTAL REVIEW

All sign permit applications shall be available through the Department of Planning and Building Safety. Each completed application shall be promptly reviewed. Any necessary modifications to the application shall be provided in writing to the applicant.



BUILDING AND ELECTRICAL CODES

All signs must conform to the regulations and design standards of the building code of the city and all other applicable codes. Wiring of all electrical signs must conform to the electrical code of the city.

PROCESS

Requests for a sign permit shall be approved, approved with conditions, or denied, or a request for modifications issued, within 15 days after City receipt of a complete application, unless such period is waived or extended by agreement of the applicant. If modifications are requested, a decision on the permit shall be entered within 15 days after City receipt of the applicant's response to the request for modifications, unless such period is waived or extended by agreement of the applicant.

MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP

All signs, both currently existing and constructed in the future, and all parts thereof shall be maintained in a safe condition and the owner or lessee of any sign shall take all reasonable actions to maintain the sign so that any sign will be maintained.

CONTRIBUTORS

City Council

- Mayor Charles Sisk
- Dave Clabots
- Robert Muckle
- Sheri Marsella
- Frost Yarnell
- Hank Dalton
- Ron Sackett

Planning Commission

- Jeffrey Lipton
- Chris Pritchard
- Susan Loo
- Ann O'Connell
- Monica Sheets
- Scott Russell
- Steve Brauneis

Community Organizations and the City of Louisville Board / Commission Members

- Business Retention and Development
- Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown Business Association
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Louisville Revitalization Commission

Specific Downtown Business Owners

- Garrett McCarthy, Old Louisville Inn Restaurant
- Jim Cohen, Empire Lounge and Restaurant
- Joan Riggins, Blue Parrot Restaurant

Department of Planning and Building Safety

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- Sam Light, Light, Kelly, & Dawes, PC - City Attorney

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